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Press Release

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Attorney General Darrell McGraw Announces Concealed Handgun Reciprocity Agreements With Other States and Raises the Awareness of Gun Safety

Charleston - Attorney General Darrell McGraw today announced concealed weapon reciprocity agreements with other states.

“West Virginians with valid concealed handgun permits are allowed to carry concealed handguns in KY, VA, NC, OH, FL and SD pursuant to existing and new reciprocity agreements. We are currently in active discussion with other states. We have received recognition by Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Vermont, but we do not have a reciprocity agreement with the states,” stated Attorney General Darrell McGraw.

In conjunction with this announcement in order to raise awareness of gun safety, today consumers can receive a free gun lock from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the state police detachments in, Beckley, Elkins, Logan, Morgantown, Moundsville, Parkersburg, South Charleston, and Sutton. Consumers can also receive free gun locks from some of the local gun shops in these regions. These locations include Flat Top Arms Inc. in Beckley, B & J Pawn and Sport in Elkins, Marstillers Gun Shop in Morgantown, Hartley’s Gun Shop in Moundsville, Carl’s Gun Shop in Parkersburg, and Mack & Dave’s in Huntington.

“We have added a new section to our website detailing handgun reciprocity agreements with other states. This information can be a reference guide to the West Virginia concealed handgun reciprocity agreements with other states for consumers, business owners and visitors. For more information log on to www.wvago.gov/gunrecep.cfm or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-368-8808,” stated Attorney General Darrell McGraw.

During the 2007 legislative session House Bill 3074 was passed and signed by Governor Manchin on March 9, 2007. This law transfers the authority from Governor Manchin to Attorney General McGraw to negotiate concealed weapon reciprocity with other states.

In order to enter into concealed weapon reciprocity agreements with other states certain criteria must be met to ensure their licensing requirements for their applicants are as stringent as West Virginia’s. Additionally the other state must have a database that is readily available 24/7 that can verify the continuing validity of a concealed weapons permit. For example, law enforcement officers need to be able to prove a person’s concealed handgun permit is not void due to a recent felony or other legal disability. The states having concealed handgun reciprocity agreements with West Virginia must notify the state if and when their state concealed handgun laws change.

Attorney General Darrell McGraw’s staff has been researching and negotiating diligently with states over the last couple of months preparing for the reciprocity law to go into effect. “There are five different categories of states concerning reciprocity agreements. We have focused on the contiguous states first. There are states who match us and there are five or six states

interested in reciprocity with us, but questions exist as to whether West Virginia's requirements meet theirs. There are about fifteen states that appear to recognize any valid concealed weapons permit. Then there are states that don't meet our criteria. The last category of states are very strict about concealed weapons and do not have reciprocity laws with other states. These would include New York, California and Illinois," stated Attorney General Darrell McGraw.

"If West Virginia wants to maximize concealed weapon reciprocity with other states the scope of a background check needs to be clarified and updated. We hope to have recommendations for the legislature to consider at its next regular session. The database needs to cover the entire state and include all information about possible disabling behaviors. In the states where there is some type of statutory problem that prevents West Virginia from granting reciprocity, we are actively seeking West Virginia's recognition of concealed weapons in their state," stated Attorney General Darrell McGraw.

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